

St. John's Centennial

1960-1969

Anna Aubry

The sixties ushered a new age into the world. The halcyon period after World War II had disappeared, and the world found itself in a period of international competition, new technologies, business innovations, and the space age. Things would never be quite the same in the world or in our parish.

St. John's began playing a vital role in Kirkland life, reaching out into the community early in the decade. The first step on this journey was becoming St. John's Parish on April 19, 1960 after 40 years of mission status. (It had actually been self-supporting since 1959.) With this change of status, Father Hayman became a rector rather than a vicar.

It was a time of expansion. St. John's purchased "the Jewell House" at 210 2nd Avenue South in 1961. Our Church School grew to serve 165 children. And, in September 1961, Youth Night began with a Wednesday program of supper and an early evening education session for junior and senior high school students. Youth Night continued in six-week blocks during the school year.

Then in 1962, St. Timothy's in Redmond, and in 1965, St. Gregory's in Juanita were established under the wing of St. John's. Father Hayman found himself in the role of a "circuit riding" minister until a missionary vicar could be hired. Those serving as vicar were the Rev. William M Burnett (1964-68), the Rev. Oliver Skanse (1968-69), and Alan E. Mack, who came in 1969. (1962 saw another change for Father Hayman when he married Sarah Ann Pritchard.)

In order to accommodate an Education Wing, St. John's began planning the future Marsh Hall. That required rather involved negotiations with the City of Kirkland and finally curving Third Street South to make room for the wing. (St. John's was finally allowed to purchase the street in 1974 for \$3,267.90.) The addition of Marsh Hall in 1963, was made possible largely by the generous bequest of Katherine Marsh, a long-time parishioner who died in 1956, and members of the Parish who made generous pledges toward the much-needed education and office wing. On September 13, 1964, Bishop Curtis officiated over the dedication of the fine, new building.

While funds were being raised for the construction of Marsh Hall, Lois Peterson, St. John's Choir Director, proposed moving the organ and choir to the empty balcony in the church. As a result, the Choir Loft Project, which included a practice room, music library and organist/director's office, was added to the total plan.

Beginning in 1966, St. John's, St. Timothy's, and St. Gregory's became the Lake Washington Parish and functioned with one expanded vestry that included representation for the two missions.

Then on Saturday morning, April 1, 1967, Kirkland experienced the worst fire in its history when the Civic Center was totally destroyed. This left both Eastside Handicappers and the Teenage Activity Center homeless. St. John's had been instrumental in forming both groups, and the Vestry felt it was necessary to complete the northwest wing of Marsh Hall to provide a home for these two groups. St. John's was soon able to raise the funds to finish the roughed-in wing, and with much volunteer labor, Marsh Hall was ready for both groups.

Later the church building and the new hall also became home to not only a gamut of church activities, but also Boy Scouts, weekly Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon meetings, and many other community activities.

Things had certainly changed since our property was purchased in 1922. A simple brown building had been built, added to, and then burned. A new building had risen in its place with additional wings to house St. John's growing responsibilities in the parish and in the city. And, the world around had changed dramatically, too. Parish members of the sixties could take for granted airplanes, atomic energy, automobiles, automation, radio, refrigeration, color motion pictures, television, flights to the moon, and super highways crowded with cars. Few of these things had even existed 50 years before when St. John's had begun. That tiny church in Kirkland had, indeed, grown with the century.